



Allison Grayhurst

The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst

- *completed works from 1988
to 2017 (Volume 4 of 5)*

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*For Every Rain – a collection of early poems
Jumana and Perfect Love – two poetic prose pieces*

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

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- completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 4 of 5)
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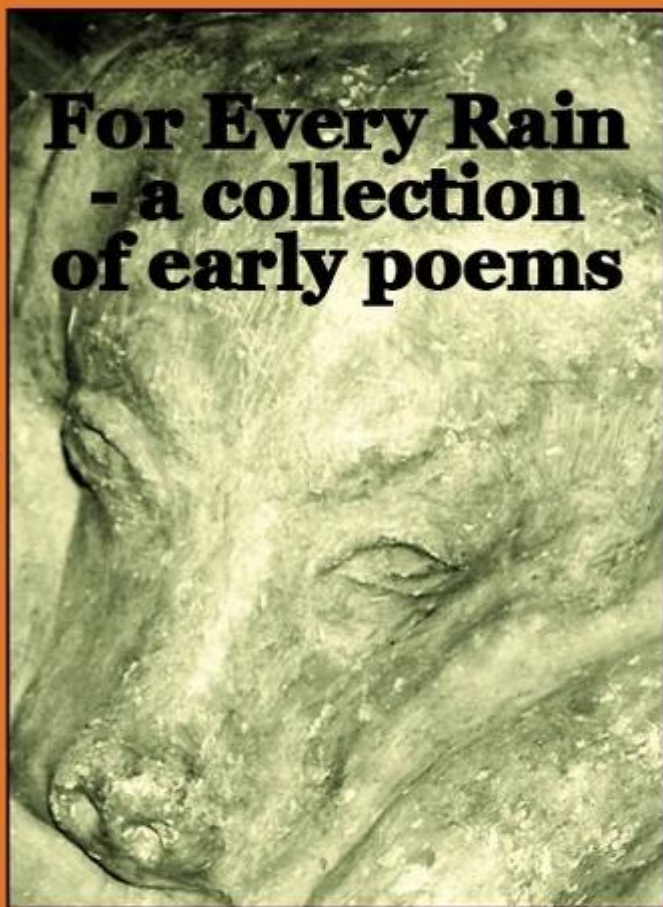
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**For Every Rain
- a collection
of early poems**



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Allison Grayhurst

For Every Rain
- *a collection of early poems*

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Twilight

There is a beat in the darkening air
that whispers of love and laughter

There is song in the rippling wind
so moving
so unmeasured
that even dreams
cannot meet its glory

There is colour
There is more than power
in one stroke
in one fallen ray
that gives rhythm
to a discordant day

They say
Night comes
like death comes
 eventually

But there,
Oh there! The first star . . .

Footsteps Passing

I have looked in the mirror
and found everything ruled
by old age
nature
clouds and labour
Do not say, this city is my hope
We all have tasted delusions
absorbed by the sound of footsteps
coming closer, passing
Too much is lacking.
Fame
is my hand
pressed in wet pavement
The future is desire
going to bed overtired
overdrunk with wishes and blindness
Do not tell me the world is gentle
or to kill a mosquito
is a matter of self-defence
Believe you?
What can it matter?
My best friends
I perish beside
Pockets are picked
Sensitivity feeds addiction
I have learned
the stars are wise
by reason of their incredible glow
And that dying
is a great deal less important
than the smallest of favours
done with a smile.

Kneel Beside Love

If ever you kneel beside love
strip yourself in the midnight cold
and your heart expands
moist
like ice on heat
feels the flood
the zealous delight
uprooting misery
in moments too marvelous for words . . .

Gardeners, lovers
you decide
the wish
beside each other
faces are made real
inadequacies vanish
leaving no trace of murder
or time

What you feel
walking
in this pulsing spring
daring such joy
no illness could alter
What you feel
briefly
as you join skin and souls . . .

creating refuge
even death
cannot violate.

Watchman Of The Night

From the horizon
he emerges
winged man
sapphire eyes
savagely unfurling his bright feathers

He cups the salt from the sea
takes it to his mouth as nourishment -
pellets to spew at the sky

Then up!
twisting with the wind
dancing in the aura of the setting sun

His silver hair
flares the sky
his midnight lips
lost in haunting song

Chariots, tigers
race, prowl
around his blue body

Swirling, he meets the moon
and takes his place among the stars.

Wingbeats

I could tell you
never close your eyes
it is us
and us only
who carry the iron
and dismiss ourselves from the cross
Where is home?
Can you answer me
in this month of sensuous summer?
When we love
is it enough
to entice the dead from their settled sleep?
I once heard the sound of pain
in an old man's voice
It was real
the magic of song
milk from a mother's swollen breast
the authentic desire
for union
Every vineyard
has its legend
Every someone
wanders protected and important
in this long age of insanity
Nearly all dancers
have hesitated,
felt their passions, suspicious
unnatural impulses
depleting their strength

But so -
heaven is not a womb
nor a winter's twilight
intense but brief
I once saw a golden eagle
repeat its wingbeats
alone in the breeze
flapping
as if to say:
I know myself
completely.

What Saves?

Even if sleep
proves to be
infinite, will you
rest beside
the great summer flowers
and bless your limits
like you would
the stars?
And if you inherit nothing but
the small and unseen,
will it stop you
from swimming like
a swan in the cold ruthless
waters of existence?

When you sit upright
in your private corner,
waiting for some substance to show, or kneel
like
a broken tower, cracked by the
shakes and sounds
of foreign fears, can the music
reach you?

Does it accomplish?

Truth Givers

They are in the hospitals
They are under the eucalyptus trees
They are in the anniversary cakes
They are in the stone-hedged mansions
gossiping on the latest idea
to muse over with their delicate, pale hands.
At the end of heaven's domain
they celebrate entrance into the market place
where they arrive with their wings,
proud and evasive.
Too large to drown
in the gloomy crowded faces,
so they soar between the sheep herd
trapped
in that superior altitude.
The wind fingers them with its wet tongue.
Unharméd, they rock
over the body of the weeping sky,
searching for something beyond
conclusions or ecstasy.

The artists tilt, shipwrecked next to them:
Locked on horizons of unresolved beauty.
Some days their eyes close and the flute touches the pen
with explosive unity, with ancient embrace.
As far apart as the ghost and the angel, they edge inside
the artist's heart, just to feel
the skinless souls
of love makers.

Stage Fighter

Showman, you are inert
as you warm your jaws
on the flesh of fame - What substance
is this dangling addictive worm?
Have they seen your mouth
curse and scream
from regions beyond sunshine's shadow?
Part of arriving is knowing the small side
of grandeur. But you!
You wore your god-given javelin, split trees
with its darting blade until
mountains lay half crushed, fragmented,
fuming with decay.
The poet is in the kitchen marveling at the moon.
The banker is with his notes,
with his severed nerves,
watching the globe take its last full run . . . And you?
You are making sure the camera
is straight to record perfectly
your stainless steel smile.
Are you suffering?
The stage is impartial.
The audience fights like starved seagulls
for one glance at your Adonis wig.
You are staring out from the subway walls,
dying for immortal victory - a billboard type
permanence.

I Will Run

**I will go now
into the constellations
like into a field of marigolds.
I will run now like a drunkard
at dawn. The waves
of morning's early light
will be my medicine - the blue
& purple & orange thin arches,
all aglowing.**

**I will funnel my way out
of this personal war. I will
carry wounds & swords
in my arms. I will throw
them to the sky until
they fall like rainstorm,
leaving no trace after a
a day of sun.**

**You will not find me
walled behind my face,
or hunt me beneath
the garden cellar.**

**The nothing-air
will steal my name
& tomorrow I will
slip between the rocks.**

Crow

I followed the herd
into the abyss. I drank venom
from the eucalyptus
trees. I rushed against you:
My flag was waving.
The next day I left you,
abandoned. Shot like a beam
into the dark cave night. You followed,
coaxed like a crow
who beckons, black and beautifully:
I gave myself up without a word.
You wore my skin, laughed freely
at my thirst.
So easy now . . .
I am consumed and in
a dream. Love is falling
like apples.

Wax Museum

God is your hobby:
My mouth inhales,
flushes you in.
Going to the wax museum to visit your sleeping body;
tonight with effort, tomorrow, with regret.
It is the end of a miracle, nevertheless,
I won't forget the sirens, your steel throat
rusted with alcoholic burns
or the hooves and the poison,
how you tempted me to the maximum degree.
There is a sunset I am cupping in my hands,
it is turning dark blue like the colour
we both love
and I am staring into it like a poet mesmerized by the sea.
Farewell my pirate friend -
Live good,
conquer the pitiful sky in your dreams.
Every barrier is a mountain
challenging your devotion,
torturing your nights with its magnificent summit.
I drink like a root from the underground: I am not upset
though shadows are cleaving, swarming my soul.
I am only running,
and it's a long way to paradise
even when you hurry.

Somewhere Falling

Take the blueness of daybreak. Laugh,
unbothered by the lucent
 shadows. Today I slept,
mawkishly normal, mild
behind the mirror. Already, I can feel
 the horizon issue forth
its brazen beauty . . . entering the
dusk of a new tomorrow. Disguising myself
 the same as yesterday, I resurrect
my war - caged in plastic garments.
You are right, we travel in circles,
 swallowed by the movements that affirm
our preconceptions. Are these dreams?
My breath sails between air-tight
 walls. I eat lemon-drops
by the moon, honoring my thirst
for solitude. Behind the wheel,
 the years dance
elusive before me, giving shape to
my soul. Turning, trespassing
the boundaries of time
& sea, I wash my face in the wind &
dissolve into the skinless sky -
 Transfigured.

Faith We Bear

Faith we bear like loosened chains
after years of sluggish walking.

Faith unpricked by joy, and strengthened
be the anguished doubt, rides the rounds
of every sphere (musical or scream)
to lead us past the greed
used to justify our undoings.

Faith we bear that salvages
the anxious, wanting heart, brings
peace to both the striving and the struggle,
brings paradox - a tense but still guide -
an anchor, a fruit, a voice to listen to,
one that is jealous of all that bruises
this faith we bear
 with armour consciously
 down.

Under Sheets

In the oblivion
wound, we brush skins:

Two guardians with
no cause. Beneath the cranium
stake where our knees
join like waves,
loving primordial,
in spontaneous time.

A place for tigers
to burn. An ultimate
trembling - your ivory mouth
stealing into me
like a harpoon. The tassels
wrapped around your fingers

whisper & navigate
my sorrow. You are magnified
like a bird descending, wonderful
as music.

Why ask me if I love?
Your head is buried

in a pillow, rocking
against the wall. For me,
there are no daggers,
only the amber moon, watching,
as we fight for
our deliverance.

The Boy

Under the limp tree
he sits, curing himself
of the bawling rains &
patchwork
gardens.

He inhabits heartbreak
& hunger as a primitive,
refusing all
that does not measure with
instinct.

The cloud's configuration alters him
like a new philosophy.

He thinks of the cosmos
like a bird, who plays its part
blamelessly
under the yawning cover.

Destiny is
a grain of sand.

Life itself - enough
imagination.

He holds hands with
the outlawed beasts, bearing
the world as though it was nothing
but a small, small
shadow.

Husband

by you, by the light
I fall asleep. Because you are
my vowel, my 'welcome home' and
my sea in summer, I will sit
naked for you, never needing someone else.
I will be ready for winter,
for childbirth,
and days of stagnant pain.
Because you give wounds without evil,
a perspective of beauty in the weeds
and worries . . . because your faith
is unbroken by bitterness and others stand
against you trying to defeat
your incomparable strength . . . because
you carry the courage of a saint,
the energy of a child, a body
of perfect symmetry, for you I will
kill my myth and desperate needs.
I will join you on your lake where
mystery and safety meet and the living
gather - individual, whole.

For This Face Only You Could Alter

Be for me my mask torn down.
Take from me my old and hatching temper.
Take my wanting, my struggle
to renounce approval.
Be for me the lonely desire, the one
celebrated by each breath.
Take the guilt from my
loins, the hours spent mute, consumed
by androgynous fear.
Be for me a living arrow, a communion
of conviction and gentleness.
Take from me my fate, a conditioned future,
an inevitable plan.
Love me
although my love is sensual,
thin of voice, of spiritual
decision.

Raising Grace

A child in a mother's arms.
both dissolve in joy, freed into
the instinct of love as I watch bewildered
by such beauty.

This I hear
says farewell like all else
that seems immortal, that makes ripple
the human heart, perfecting
our inwardness.

Sister and brother, natural
friends that no obstacle could
burden beyond repair. Lovers too,
safe in a tender silence are able to
bear the weight of clouds.

Yet the rain does arrive, folding fists
of isolation around my heaven. Around the bend,
still breathing, listen to breath as if it was the only sound
not blurred by vagueness. Disconnected like
the sun is from the moon.

Then I see the mother and child hold
in perfect intimacy. And I place
my candle there, beside them, to be
influenced.

Shroud The Moon

I see your eyes
float like balloons
through the giant storm.
I cradle your blanket. I cry
on the carpet like a child,
all in privacy, between rooms
& walls. All for the farewell too
real to speak.
The world will not compensate,
will not hold the hope to get out
of this hell for long.
It will empty my pockets of
your key - make every minute
a dangerous bite.
There is a cold bird screaming down
our chimney. There are rats
under the fridge. The rain echoes like
a mountain cry. You will not
love me like I need. You will not & I will not
be brave.

Aged Sculptress

Now I think of you
when the pears are darkening
on the kitchen table and hardly an animal
wanders through the trees in nights
of starless black.

I think of you when I hear the
glory of a child's excited cry
or see a cat's half-closed eyes,
brimming with proud independence.

I think of the Ontario lake, silver-toned
and maddened during a winter storm.

I think of a delicate strand of grass
or a smooth stone that has known the
caress of many human fingers.

I think of you like I do a sadness and longing
held together with unflinching peace, held
in contemplation.

I think you are good like the air is good,
and a branch that has fallen to the ground or
a dying butterfly.

I think you have moved me
like a wave that has swallowed my flesh
and washed my eyes in clay
to be reborn, sensuously devouring.

Naked Side

I've seen the destruction
of visions, the penetration
of a good cause, seen souls
anesthetized by sadness.

The only constant is endurance,
is the thing that jumps out from
the void then reverses back
into its indifferent swallow.

One change, then the moment
slips into a new glimpse of understanding.

One small desire fulfilled and all pain
is humbled.

Mortal Love

**Now that I am not alone
and the dream I dreamt
with the most desire
is discovered . . .**

**Now with Him, safe from
spiritual seeking because
I found Him and more mystery
than music brings, found what
only could be given beyond
the turning of the wheel . . .**

**Found my lover singing
his unriddled truths. Found
my lover more tender than
the heart's soft skin.**

**Now that we three
rise and walk as one, passion
and peace join and swell, and
even the senseless theft
of nightfall is forgiven.**

Departure

The lights go off
with a loveless burn.
It's not good,
dreaming together of the
virgin moon.
It is us, & we are alone
tracing the dark-stoned
dancers. Our feet curve to the wind,
climb the laced clouds.
So sad this way down
into the cyclone twist & twine.
Long ago, we yearned for the triumphant glow,
when the thunderclap night
would lead us further into love's sacred realm.
But tomorrow the snows will
fall and the hangers
will be empty.
Tomorrow there will be a single bed
& you & I will walk bare handed
on separate shores.

Shell of a Serpent

These are great things,
you take
with your mounting neglect.
They are things cast out
of the “beautiful”, that
dig into polar ice and
fossilize there; numb,
indistinguishable.

And though you feel superior,
inhuman, hovering above
like the moon, with your face carved
in one constant expression, you yourself
will not give light to the
lonely, will not illuminate
for the sake of another's need.

Your own pain - cunning, hunting - is
a tentacle that quivers cold-blooded
for pity's gullible caress.

You distance your heart from the humble dancers.

Broken Limb

How many scenes do I touch?
Do I love the lone moon
among the ancient stars?

The wind was lashing the trees,
bullets were striking the alarm
and a million flowers
trembled in the distance . . .

The man with the beard
raved in vain
about love and necessity.
I looked over the valley for a friend,
found nothing except some exotic trees
bending beautifully to seduce the sky.

The dead could not keep
from dying again
and the innocent hearts
had failed to 'never compromise'

How many paintings burned
that night in the forest?
After the ashes, the chanting and the painful release,
there was no returning.

I filled my glass with song.
I wrote letters to my morbid mind
and mistook to all for God.

**Nobody spoke, nobody carried
the muse in their smiles.**

**When we see the end, will we know it for sure
like we do a broken limb, or even,
the first smells of spring?**

Marrakesh

Up the proud hills,
through the red Moroccan
morning, girls sing
as flies fill their nostrils,
arms covered in clay -
 terracotta flame.

It is winter and sheets of sunlight
overpower the paths. They go down
into the casbah with bare feet
& clothe:

 dreams of indigo justice.
A little boy guides tourists through
stealing kisses & cash.
Tall as stretched flowers, the blue people
come with their ancient arms, swinging
like whale fins from side to side. Bees crown
the orange juice with buzz & sting, as the snake
charmer carries his wealth on his back,
(around, around), like a
heavy fear.

 The rains come.
Pant legs lifted to knees,
eyes smiling in awe. Rains
as thick as the devil's sobs. Rains
as wild as the children

who need no remedy
from the bending ocean
of froth & sky.

Last Glimpse Before The Light

**Creature of lost endurance, lying
on the floor, lying
with back facing the
ceiling, swelling with anger
& stubborn fear.**

**Man of long sorrow,
conqueror of thresholds.
Man of melancholy that
pours like visions
from his eyes.**

**Highways, mad people
& polluted air -
enough to ignite
his wanderlust, his cramp
of isolation.**

**Creature with arms spread, head hidden
in the carpet
like a phoenix bird
after the fall. Man motionless, crazed,
incapacitated**

**knows the world is only shell,
knows it is heavy like habit,
an unspeakable burden
that grips & sometimes
devours.**

Those Who Hunt For Inspiration

It is not so easy
to hold the
delicate fear of
being.

Continuously terrified
& charmed
by the intimate surge
of desire and music and touch.

Silence yields to the cry
then back to soft desperation.

Some days delirium sets in,
as if a child again, drunk by
every electric beat of the wind.

The moon is full of torment.
The sun throws kisses to our
small eyes, piercing like nails.

So sick of its bright caresses,
so grateful for its yellow warmth
we vacillate between excessive dreams
& boredom.

**All is flesh. All is flesh
& memory & unspeakable hopes.**

***(There is a mad ghost cruising on the breeze.
There is mud corrupting every vein.)***

**We wait for love to shake us alive.
We wait for the blue-winged god
to lie down & hold us until
our bellies break
like waves -
 announcing All
 to earth and sea.**

Through Arched Doors

(for James Baldwin)

You speak
of the elemental
soil beneath bone
 & tear -

Scale with
genius a midnight
whip, a
 burning deed.

We drown in your intimate
wave as faces of many hues
enter your eyes. You make us
 drum hard

on the back of a beautiful fire.
You hold us near your mind, embracing
rooftops, stairwells, the upper half of
 the sky.

Your words ripple & rape
the greyness from every sickness scrawled.
There is nothing
 as terrible

as your writer's hands
that strike with light
our narrow hates
 & wounds.

Sunset

Night immortal,
engraved in every eye,
& in the flowers that
fold each petal over
as twilight's territory
trembles visible.

The silent figured
people in churches, in cafes
and in the back-ground country -
does each one
frame a life after
a private freedom? And does only love
awaken one to bend
without splintering, without a
scream?

But love cannot help the
slumbering soul or the mind
that has no wish to soar.

And even children
curl alone with the moon,
sometimes.

The Tide To Break A Vaulted Pain

**We are lost on this side
of the stream, sideways
looking to land & the drown fish
hooked to the shoreline.**

**If I could give you
something polished & pure,
a kiss or dolphin's smile,
I would.**

**The sky
is melting, dripping torrents
from the punctured universe
above. And here,
between these rooms
where we live, its liquid darkness
seeps in covering our hair, our feet
in its wet, colossal tar:
alien sorrow. The silence
rages through the airvents, and the lights
burn to a dull nothing. The white-nothing
of teeth & moon & ice & cloud.**

**We seek the breath
of freedom's wake as
magic crumbles all around us in pools of
untouchable beauty.**

But to give you this way
the best of my living love,
to know the unseen
behind your kaleidoscope scales,
know the breakdown,
know the tenderness
& wounds,
and to hold, hold . . .

You came to me

**through the hard jaw of the world,
anguished, under the weight of bad habits,
your happiness fading like
your fate, into a fine line running out.**

**You came, prowling the landscape, out of
some gripping past, eyes driven deep by
loneliness.**

**You came, dressed in feline black, carrying
the weight of a shattered city
in your arms, and your blood was cold
with howling.**

**From the snows, finding me with a glance, you came
like spring in my nostrils
and cried & cried as you came
plummeting down, lost from some angel's
symbolic grasp.**

Call For The Hour to Clear

I chose this
lonely year.
Chose to thirst
for the curved
rainbow lights
& you, who warms
my back with the weight
of innocence.

There is a lineage joining
our hunger & our fears,
swaying on dream-spun fingertips.

A thousand thoughts - lame
like twilight is
from stopping the night.
Thoughts that tilt
like antlers to the heaven's
great smoke.
But you know
what I am waiting for. Words.
Words that are bone-real like conviction,
words to swallow me into
your thin arms.

That say - it is not dust
this long love. That tomorrow
will be unrelenting,
moving with fierce design
to overthrow the dark angels.

The clock must burst.

The hesitation too,
where even kisses
are pledged
anonymous.

When Air-borne Beings Fall

As though my heart
was sand, absorbing
the dive of crows.

In the deep,
in the still deep ground
of dust & ruins, wings
fall like smashed shells
expanding into
the flowing air.

I would give my capsized house,
my bed, my favourite corner
just to feel the rise of their quickening tides
clap over my bones & spirit. To know the fury
of feathers skillfully slicing
the skin of clouds. I would say this
is worth my enemy's claw, worth a mouth
full of laughter. I could speak again
of love without weight, of a saffron flower
exposing all to the sun.

I could take pictures in the garden.

Denial

I will not be drawn
into you - mute with treacherous emotions,
shadowy at best in this morose of need and trophies.
Love is not a possible banner to bear. Love is not
this city, painted with greed and
the 'doing anything' for survival.
It is okay to die, but not okay for my mind to be inebriated
with euphemisms, misty without edge or sharp magic.
I will not be drawn into the giving of roses or waiting
for the things within to confirm connection
with what is heavy, tedious and demanding.
I will stay in place, committed to my familiar adventure,
block the gold from clawing on my screen. I will just look
and see nothing new, feel like a shoreline
on a day of perfect weather.
I will not be drawn. I will myself concealed
in my mad lagoon, immune
to any intoxicating distraction or further
longing.

Guardian *(for Beeper)*

**Dog-eyes like a morning
infused
with warmth.**

**I dream of sending you
silhouettes wedged
from the mountain,**

**where we would go
flooded with lyric & hazy light.
By the campfire furnace,**

**chasing the breeze through
the haunted wood. And then,
by the river, by daylight,**

**your tongue outstretched to cup bee.
Your oversized ebony head gliding through
the water like a dolphin's.**

**Under the bridge, on the railroad tracks,
your muscles moved erecting
monuments of innocence and incomparable strength.**

**Past the fence, past
my sight, releasing sounds of excitement, sounds
of a simple, language bark,**

**as you ran
thunderous & dark
as departure
often is.**

Giving Roses And Bread

I turned.
I will not turn again
from her sad space & ruin.

No wand, no crocodile
tongue will shut
me out.

The hour is blood, is
boiling, is locked
in her iron skull. Her back is straight
for the first time in months, and
her fingers tap the table one by one.

I saw her climb
the ladder & crash.
I saw the marrow leak from her bones.

I turned.
I will not turn again.
My smile will be her shelter,

and with my chains & circle,
I will build for her a garden
where the crows will dance

to drown her madness,
helpless
then gone.

Your Body Beyond

**Around your smooth
shadow-lined figure
my hands cup & dig under
as though your skin
was water. As though
each hair on your chest,
a sea-flower perfectly
placed & measured.**

**Tides of muscles on your legs
and back
sway
with rhythmic beauty.**

**When you put your fingers on my hot belly,
my ghost lies down, blindfolded by light.**

**For hours covered by your
thirsty tongue, as a mid-day radiance
seeps through the drawn curtains.**

**No words to pardon our passion,
to cause a bitter tear.**

**I love you like this, forehead pressed
to shoulder, abandoned.**

Preparing

I go to the crosswalk
and leave my bread crumbs on the other side.
I am waiting for motivation, for a clarity of purpose
that I once owned like a beautiful stone
I sunk under the St. Lawrence rapids.
When I was a child,
I watched those rapids without fear,
stood close to the edge and never wondered
about the slippery underfoot,
never worried about the shadflies arriving
like a plague of river insects
or about my loneliness
that turned into a ghost companion
comforting me in those grey Quebec afternoons.
But here, in this riverless realm,
I cannot place my hands down.
I cannot stretch wide enough
to feel whole. I go to the corner store and hear answers
that only I
and the birds
can hear.

Sight at Zero

I am where fireflies dance
in a birdless noon.

I am treading water, looking
for a lodged piece of land
or even a dolphin's fin
to navigate me through this
wounded sea. The air
is smoking & a world
away lovers assassinate love
for the sensation of pride.

Rain, drumming onto my neck, onto
my jugular, rain spewed from
the moon's mouth, enters & dissects
worse than any broken fame. Too late
to cross the inner clouds. Too long lost
in the wood under a weird & angry sun.

It is my jealousy
that has woken, generous
with hate. It is agony & frailty
like an eggshell hammered
by a razor's sharp tongue.

I see dragons rise
from sand dunes. I hear
the laughter of a bride. My days are closed.
My element (*water, hymn, water*)
abandoned
for wishbones.

Green Haven and You

I dream this early morning of
you, trading
all you own for love.
Birds walk on water, cooing the river
still. Two bones
lie buried beside the bank,
grey with decay, anonymous
as each fallen red-vein leaf.

I walk to your favourite rock,
still cold from night. There are
ten stars in the sky
visible as ten snowy owls
undone by dawn.

I dream of you across the vaulted miles.
You live inside my forming smile and in
the colours flooding the horizon, in
the almost-zenith sun,
advancing.

When Small Things Die

This is the guilt of being,
the empty horror,
the fearsome weight
of living conscious,
awake to the dull and lingering
ghosts. In my hands,
a small death, a mild cry,
a feeble resurrection.

This, the detached cycle,
the rotating climb
that no feeding heart grows used to.
Infant soul, infant eyes gazing
into my own. Body wriggling under
my warm fingers.

This is my love
expanding, my love too limited
to hold the healing needed, or shut off
the crude struggle of a gasping life. Life
thin-boned and motherless.
Cold paws, blue tongue,
neck, a loose ladder holding such a heavy,
awe-inspiring head,
slips
down into final slumber:

looking now
like a child's prized toy.

Altered Behind City Gardens

We walked behind city gardens.
He was singing
and riding
his hunger like a spear
through brightened houses and
cameo clouds.

He was saying to me - keep gold
and wild - as he lifted
a finger, pointing
above the ribs,
between my breasts.

How that day I became
his, as though gone into
his light and into his terror -
endless.

How that day I felt
a new blade of grass
beneath my rugged ware,
with every step,
found my country whole.

Turtle

Hard slow force -
back the shape of half
a bell. Lipless
mouth wide with sunstroke
fear. Double eyelids
close, looks like gel
over two black wounds.

Your elbows tight inside
your chamber-shell. Your neck
stretched like a slinky, nodding
from side to side.

Without voice, your legs
leap out like arrows, push
frantically at the air.

You are in my hand, the size
of half-a-hand. You are quiet now,
head back inside your giant roof.

Released from human grip,
your feet feel water, edge
across piled-up rocks,
where you stop

to smell the dark aquarium
and rest
your tortoise-green
toes.

What Hands Can Hold

I will not cry today
the teardrops of saints.
Tomorrow I will not
lay my body flat on the road
for the dove's passing.

God's features
are vast as the sands.
No life is dead
to private dreams.

The sea sings its own
rhyming fury.
The eagle takes dust and wind
equally
under its wings.

Who feeds the raging
lion's mouth?
Who weeps for the insect's accidental
death? Are the angels too great for
these? And our human hands,
are they too meager to
accept these small mercies,
these common miracles,

as we watch friends perish
and the pendulum-tides leap
and devour,
offering no reward
to the drowned
nor saved?

Making Love

Was this the happiness
conceived, to fly
through the porcelain
shapes of these unutterable days,
to strive for love, overloaded
with longing and reality's
dumbstruck call?

On Earth, or in the space
we cannot grow enough to cross,
I hold you. You are my language
dying to be born.
You are the one I will never recover from,
the only companion my heart has known.

I cannot envy the stars, or
the soft-spoken trees.
For there is landscape
enough, here beside you,
where all of heaven's disguises
glow bright,
transparent.

Miles Without Grace

With October gone
and cold cascading
over church steps,
stiffening the wings of
butterflies and hawks
a new dream raves
with October gone.

Falling clouds, falling shadows
into the heart-nests
into the white morning flame.

Only these things of faith won't die,
only the skulls, the bronze soldiers
and the garden clocks live and knock
imagination loose.

Midnight on the stairs. A hard
bow and chain. And the brown-eyed
children laughing in the afternoon.

Death does not bow.
It is wood and nightingale cry.

I carry him with me
in my knapsack memories
and in the inside, whole and as
gentle as a ghost gliding over

the earth
and seas.

Germination

If only your shoulders
would spread like petals
I would dive into your flesh,
crawl the branch of your spine
to the tip of your heart.

No mad hills to survey, no
beasts to flee
or tame. Only
ourselves entwined
and our toes curled
in bliss and heat.

If only the dull wind
outside
would not rock you
away and the long rib
of clouds would not seize me
into its bed of rain,
then maybe
my hands would be
your spoke and
stronghold and
your affection, my constant
bloom.

To Wait Without Drowning

Too quiet here
in the yellow rains, the yellow
darkness
ranting outside the door.

The wig of the sky
swells like a million balloons;
clouds,
foaming through the cracks of eternal space.

I want to say one thing
swift enough to catch
birds.
I want to say this thing

that contains shelter and the squawking storms,
that floods my body as though my skin
was a sponge, floods first,
then severs each nerve and cord.

I want to lie under water until I awaken,
until hunters and herds walk the grasslands,
calm
against each other's shoulders . . .

What A Dream Can Tell

Last night I held a muse
under the sheets.

For an hour I waited
like a hunter after a prized prey.

He was beside me, tucked inside
his male shell.

He would not touch my breast
or back. I waited between

war & sleep for his shadow
to ignite. In my mind there were

archways made of silver & thorns,
& horses with pumped-up shoulders

racing aimlessly to & fro.
I looked for him among the pastures wild

& in the oceans of living octopi. I looked
behind a sniveling child, into the eyes

of a great afternoon. I held my muse but
for a blind hour. I could not keep him.

I could not love with all my heart.

Dostoevsky

Demon of everglade beauty
of the dark space around the
moon.

Sensitive to the point of sickness.
Deep-set eyes like the eyes
of some brooding god,
hammering
the earth to pieces.
Breath of an invalid, gambler
& saint, weighed down by
sentiment.

Breath of grey and yellow
skies above you, blood red
buried beneath bone and
skin.

Hand of a writer,
naked without a pen,
like a new-born bird
flung
from its nest: flesh on fire.
Apocalypse mind, opener
of the seventh seal. Mentor of all
believers.

Christ-like visions swarm your mind.
Ravaged by depression,
by high ideals that
rip
out your ribs, one by one
into the thick day.

Days Without Water

My arms grow weary
under the wheel
Skulls in my pockets
and a mountain up ahead
with flesh and jaw bone
extended

I search for his airborne heart
in the crevices of clouds

I search for his pure
brave gaze in the way
birds with wing graze
the edge of each rainbow, anew

I walk into autumn's
darkening rays, lonely
as the architecture of church walls,
lonely as the light
in the half-closed eyes
of children

I think again of his thin fingers
exhaling tenderness in every blind curve touch

He is milk & wind
He is nowhere
to be found

Desire

does not come
like tolerance, learned,
worked for. Withstanding
cruelty, dry lips,
wild pain, it grows larger
than love and God and grows
until all gestures reveal it.

Secretly in the shade of devotion,
it rages. Crouching behind churches and
stairwells, it tongues its drug sweeter
than touch. Burns the stomach, starves
the heart of faithful riches.

When it comes it has no error
nor the unanchored presence
of doubt.

When it comes, it comes riding,
circling like nightfall
the soul's great yolk.

Dark Prophets

They hold the ghost feather.
They cry by cause of extreme imaginations.
Paranoia on pillows,
the stench of shoes and month-old towels
under fingernails.
Liberty in sleeping pills & mirrors
that have no shine.

This they have, spirits stabbed
with hunger, doubt & arrogance
raging equally by their bedsides.
Encyclopedias divulged in dead languages
& hoards of filthy critics teasing with
axe and indifference
their true-goal flower.

They crack their heads on insecurity.
They do not believe in this world.

From balconies, from strait-jackets,
from honeymoon apartments, they expose
the human guilt, delicate visions
that seduce the blind with wonder.

Newyears

The crow is painted white
not black today. I am lost, too lost
in the empty closets.
These machine people are like cannibals
sucking the oxygen out of us
contemporary believes: A woman flutters her eyelashes
like a bored crocodile snapping its jaws at flies.
A sparrow cleaves like air to the mute trees.
(There is no glory in the mass
coveting excitement like violent steeds.)
The lights go ablaze - beer-belly men
smash their bottles into the grey stinking mist.
Beside the brick buildings
horseriders ride through a decade of fire and complaint.
The spotlights are spinning - No smile is real.
In desire, in design
the firmament is shut out from sight.
Luckless angels walk through
the scavenging crowd. Fame is singing
all dressed in fur - rich cruel shine.
The flares set off a new beginning
as ice-balls are hurled by the hands of reckless devils.
And they call my name: Blue New Age!
I am in a mud puddle fondling this insanity.
I face the pimpled stranger.
City of shadows, street lamps, revolvers;
tonight, hearts fall into the hands
of twisted, consuming lust.
Tomorrow, the show is dust
and we wake
with Time, like time
before.

Sculptor

So hard & regal
are the cry of your creations.
A sadness that moves
to be opened:

Stone stuck
movement. Watchers
in the distance
breathing out
your madness.

Old like
love, your roots
have no end. They burrow
with a strength no god
could hinder.

Your hands
outstretched
to the foreign dancer:

shrewd as passion,
life-filled
as the sea.

As We Live

Too much of artificial fate,
we ask for destiny.

The hero knows this
more than the king.

The river that plunges forward
into the source of the sea, also speaks
this forceful rhythm, void of agony
or bold illusionary self-praise.

Lovers too, who arch toward
the light, never compromising,
even with the threat of weeping, reach fullness,
spiritually united
beyond the conflict of longing.

And the poet and painter who,
with generous expression
extend their souls
to the uncomprehending crowd
(defenceless - transformed)
bloom artfully
from the centre
up.

Give us a name, an age
anchored in the owl-eye
sun.

The water is leaping,
baring its teeth to the Atlantic
shore.

These are no shadows
we seek
but God, God -
edible
repair.

Here, Inside Us All

What do you call it,
the adulterous, inadequate
fury
of the isolated crowd?
What do you call
the lion-hearted who pave
their way into the chilling
unknown?

I have heard feet
hurry into the cradle of infinite
night, trying
to find the centre where light
begins and echoes forth
its dreamy rays.

Outside, on the solid earth, they wander
as their existence diminishes with each forbidden
step. Though bewildered
with their origin and their heavy,
unexplained future, overburdened with the hunger
of how? & why? continuing
up of the pure experience of praising and love
shared.

Their voices, they whisper -
All we ask,
is to inscribe our names
on the skin
of eternal rivers, rushing . . . -

On The Porch

Everything arrives
like this melt-down
sun, into the dog
terror of nothingness.

Thursday came.
Then like a leaf
it died under a phosphorus
drug.

I sat on a stool
handled by the deep midnight
air.

I let the silence
lull between
my teeth.

I wanted to forget
where I was
and why each day
passed so unnoticed
into the next.

Why dust gathered
under the husk
of heart and dreams.

Why so many battles,
so many shipwrecks
& the stars. The stars,
they kissed my lips
with their light. They told me
there was no bottom,
no loneliness. They burrowed
under my eyes, then left me
weeping.

Vanishing To Red

The clay drips like melting snow.

Her triumph is her ocean,
where prayers and debris
wash away
beneath spellbound
waves.

In love or sleep her light
is one - surfacing like
an exotic smile on a face
of clandestine flush.

She sits on the rock as a legend
and makes his lips burn
like a star. She is given to myth,
and him, to her snowy owl link.

The make love -
a sail in a storm.

Nothing is for sure
but their flame-wrung desire,
and the angel
that creeps and raves
in a dying tongue
circling
their naked heads.

Vault

Do not ask
how the wind gathered
my name in this
region of shell & flesh.

Do not wonder at my
sad hands drenched
in the weight of so much held,
so much
released.

If it were possible I would kiss the
pine needle, be stung forever
by nature's flood. I would tear
my heart from this depth & growth,
become seed or shadow or someone
as strong as the iron-core moon.

My legs and knees are trembling.
Dawn is guiding me into dangerous wake.

And all lights everywhere
watch, as though
my darkness is
sealed.

After Sight

The vision lifted,
then darkness set in.

A different darkness,
one not yet
encountered, not yet
imagined.

Grey silhouettes brushing the dawn's early
sky. Joy consumed & sorrow
lived to its limit. The image of flowers,
so slow in their pursuit
of the sun. A tremendous night air
as I walked past the deserted streets
into a life that would demand what I
had never given.

This too was death, & dance & death
entwined like autumn in its blood-splattered
leaves. I praised & I was free & afraid
of what would follow this gift of rope
& tender sunshine.

Enemies remained within,
spiders & also the murderous moon.

But sinking
& sinking again into the quicksand
threshold, my breast gave way to tears,
my lips, to the astonished tremble.

I walked back into my den that coveted
no light, holding fast to
love
like a thousand children, a thousand soldiers
burned

by heaven's weight.

In The Air

**Your body, like a sponge
retains the music
of all scriptures born.**

**My hands flood over your wilderness
curves. Alone in the quiet
afternoon, cheeks pressed**

**& legs & fingers
shouting across skin, rubbing
bone & bell.**

**Your back, an ocean,
each muscles curling like a
wave unleashed after a storm.**

**I hold your ankles, your belly,
your spear. Too late to tame
the longing bite. The bed, a bath**

**of fire. We join, we drop
like birds below
the flesh & stars.**

Winter Walk

Together
like a single root
our arms link, mounting
this cold, humpback
city. We carry its air
in our lungs, and also the air
of night & kaleidoscope
sequence. We walk the
salted streets, not speaking.
Not now, not for a quick
eye-to-eye spark. Sirens
sound off around us. Bootprints
in every snowbank, leave an
echo of the quick-paced
crowd. We move down
an uncharted distance, and welcome
whatever splash of morning
that will offer to wed
our different-world ways.

The Loyal Unknown

I would like to hide
from the mountains, sleep
as a thief
in the assaulted night.

How do I compare my
enemies? They all smell
of slain desires,
itching like mealworms
in a bird's thin crop.

Among the widowed faces
there is
a gateway
into the unfathomable, happy
past: Wolves eyes, I see
confronting with unaware darkness.

The hypocrites play
their tune so beautifully stagnant, making me stumble
into oblivion.

One day when I was walking
on Arizona ground in a dry summer,
I caught a glimpse of
icy love: It came
convulsing
from the sun
to avenge my perfect day. It was an apparition,
reconciling
the whole world
to the paradoxical
cross.

Sometimes smiles
are as irretrievable
as murder.
Someone is watching me
from corridors.

Today, it is chaos.
Tomorrow - a child
will be born.

When The City Speaks

It is no small place
this devil's field
where leopard's blood
runs through the streets
like a constellation
cut from the sky.
Drunkards, drug pushers,
the cold amoebas that
die without seeing a dawn.
In Chinatown, the spell is
set loose, splitting
sidewalks with fury.
Waxen murderers, a barnyard
of devourers.
Inside,
lovers tremble,
clutched tight together,
sensual and desperate,
anaesthetized by passion,
by common fear
of the cruel madness
that pounds and pursues
just outside their door,
where all
will never be
well nor
free.

Humpback

I give this flower,
these historic eyes
to the Atlantic whale, who will perform
for me a symphony of genius. Hungry, we will
rob one another of mistrust,
caress each other's hairless skin,
holding things that gravity cannot forsake.
Once safe in the ocean's dune,
we will open our eyes, our mouths,
swallowing moonlight like pirates
from a ship.

Together through
the salted plasma we will swim and hope
for the violence born by medieval fear,
promoted by division
and encouraged by judgement
to be terminated by an acknowledgment
of identical love
(which is not accident).
Tenderly we will axe the human prejudice;
and the child and calf, rubbing wing and arm
will know the blessing of a marvelous unity,
which has been concealed to the point
of near extinction.

Seasick

Lovers of winter
weep for the strange
constellation that
gave birth to their
joining.

Notes of music rise
like a boy
from the river
giving air to a free
sadness

I remember
how well & true
your lips established mine
with their tenderness

There beside you,
mute & marvelling, we should have
given less
to the shadows . . .

for the firedogs have
crept into the rainwater,
and your smile
splits the cloudbanks
no more

Looking In

How easy to feel the weight
of choice, mutually
with the burden of circumstance.
Childhood ripens then wilts,
and in your unguarded hands, only
shades of poverty-stricken
summers remain; enormous & unavoidable.

What is real is not always the same as
what is eternal, yet those days,
when overabundant with love,
reappear, and strangely, make a difference.

You hold a torch, moving urgently through aqueducts
towards icy light. When you reach
the blue loneliness of abstraction, secretly
you are sure
the fullness of truth has rushed away
from you; and that this knowledge
too, is unusable.

You flourish beside the lightheaded angels. You carve
in stone, in vain
their god-affirming songs. You stand
outside, alarmed. You disappear.

Time hangs in your thoughts like an imaginary lover.
You look in the mirror and see
a great void, a perfect smile . . . and see
there is still so much left
to learn.

Light Rich With Innocence

(for Justin)

**Picking stones from the shore
to give your impressive, delicate
hands.**

**You repeat your
simple words, each time as a new
discovery, dramatic with joy.**

**On the rocking chair in your
uncle's arms, your eyes glow strange
like flowers do to a heart burdened by grief.**

**You pick the small rocks, one by one,
pile them up - a rainbow tower that only
your pure imagination can see.**

**You hand them to me as gifts
from good fairies, smile
a smile that stretches higher than mountains.**

**You carry your jewels in a glass
showing them with proud delight.
They are to you, tiny miracles.**

**You kiss each one.
You bless and you
behold.**

How The Sky Came

When I was a grain of sand,
I saw a rainbow robe
the sea - the weather passed
and turned me into
rock.

When I was a rock
dust and tears made a bed
inside of me, until
a mountain I rose.

When I was a mountain,
protecting beasts and people
from the city's pillaged tongue,
giving them sanction
beneath my hard shawl,
a hand swept down
and destroyed my peace,
turning me into sky:

a castle for the stars.

Treading Water

I hear the wild birds
sing beneath my skin.
Too many bitten souls,
walking by, bursting
with anguish.
The moonlight
is an avalanche, pouring
through the darkness: a dry ocean
inside the clouds.
Life is so generous
with its gifts, but these hands
like razors slaughter the sky
with world-worn
concerns.

Bare feet on grass,
feels only the stones.

Who craves the perished sun? Do I?
Do I love for nothing but death?

To be blinded by ecstasy,
to feel the tears of wonder flow
to hunt for the colossal Self . . .

I walk through the dust-ridden morn.
The wind splits my shell:
It enters. It knows

everything.

I lived in error

**in smoke, in a station
amidst**

the clouds.

I rolled through

**phantom pits,
finding fondness in each
fathomless descent.**

**With rage and thick
confusion**

**my mortality
was stained.**

**And there, coughed up, anointed
by the deep, your love
took me past**

my generations stalking

God

**in every science and witch-craft cure,
past the feel**

**of condemning visions, and intellectuals
seeping their venom
into every
willing heart.**

Your love like a lingering

**pain, pulling
me through alleyways and dungeons,
tore,**

**with a terrible force, the sickness
from my veins, and yet
as tender as**

**a riverwave
in gentle flow, guides me
onward.**

Of Things Unseen

I cannot speak the simple lie
or whitewash the canyon's depth.
I cannot flow through like
a wave, tender, lucid, despite
the storm.
Suddenly, the butterflies are huge
like intuition, like a birthday cake glowing.
A mutual silence between the stone
& the sand's finest grain.
The wind is coming from the meadow.
People are talking of things to come
that will enthrall, and maybe
injure. I have loved you with
my eyes closed & ears pressed
to the aging dream. I have loved you
lying alone with a stallion's
fury and a mare's soft fight.
I have borne my suffering
as a heart bears what it can,
living only
to praise.

For Every Rain

For every day of sleep
let me shoulder the rain.

For every autumn flower
let me pass through the
shadows well.

Who waters the eagle's nest?
How many voices cry out
in the attic up high?

Angels,
animals hailing the rising
sun. Laughter in the eyes
of children.

Go deep,
go generous past the
crossroads, through the
lonely world.

There are heartless fools
drumming to break every
good faith, and rainbows
there to drown all tears
in howling
colour.

The poems in *For Every Rain* are all written and copyrighted by © Allison Grayhurst. They are a selected collection from: the chapbook *Before the Dawn*, published in 1989 by The Plowman, written by Allison Grayhurst under the pseudonym of Jocelyn Kain; the chapbook *Joshua's Shoulder*, published in 1989 by The Plowman, written by Allison Grayhurst under the pseudonym of Jocelyn Kain; the paperback book *Common Dream*, published in 1991 by Edge Unlimited; the paperback book *Somewhere Falling*, published in 1995 by Beach Holme Publishers, a Porcupine Book; as well as poems published in poetry journals/magazines, but not in any previous books.

All of these poems have been published and have appeared in: The Antigonish Review; Dalhousie Review; The Beatnik; Gloom Cupboard; The Plowman: A Journal of International Poetry; JVC Poetry Newsletter; Skaz; Next Exit; Existere; Poetry Halifax Dartmouth; Mother of Thyme; A Joyful Noise; The New Quarterly; Pawn Press; Jones Ave.; Reach; Writers Quarterly; The Affiliate; White Wall Review; Drift #82; Zygote; Minus Tides!; Hook & Ladder; Wheel Magazine; oasis; Spokes; Poetry and Audience; Seeds; Journal of Contemporary Anglo-Scandinavian Poetry; The Amethyst Review; Beach Holme Publishers; First Offense; Harvest; Writer's Lifeline; Poetry Magazine; Print Verite; Whispers...; Poetry Nottingham International; Reflections; Sepia 55; Gossamer Poetry; Pennine Platform; Poetry WLU - A University Arts Journal; Prophetic Voices - An International Literary Journal; Beneath the Surface; ArtVilla; Alternative Press Magazine; Keep Poems Alive; Cosmic Trend - Subtle Fires; Social Justice Poetry; Creative Talents Unleashed; Spillwords Press; Schrodinger's Cat; Chicago Record Magazine; Sacred Chickens; The Bees Are Dead; Communicators League; Synchronized Chaos; The Peregrine Muse; East Coast Ink; Five:2:One Magazine

Quotes and Reviews

"Her poems read like the journal entries of a mystic – perhaps that what they are. They are abstract and vivid, like a dreamy manifestation of soul. This is the best way, in prose, one can describe the music which is ... the poetry of Allison Grayhurst," *Blaise Wigglesworth* Oh! Magazine.

"Allison Grayhurst's *Common Dream* is a massive book by a talented and enthusiastic young writer, with a feel for descriptive, meaningful verse. Philosophical and very deep," *Paul Rance*, editor of *Eastern Rainbow*, U.K.

"*Somewhere Falling* has a richness of imagery and an intensity of emotion rare in contemporary poetry. Drawn in sharp outlines of light and darkness, and rich shades of colour, with a deep sense of loss and longing and the possibility of salvation, this is an unusual book by a gifted young poet. Grayhurst's voice is one to which we should continue to pay attention," *Maggie Helwig*, author of *Apocalypse Jazz* and *Eating Glass*.

“Responsibility and passion don’t often go together, especially in the work of a young poet. Allison Grayhurst combines them in audacious ways. Somewhere Falling is a grave, yet sensuous book,” *Mark Abley*, author of *Glasburyon* and *Blue Sand, Blue Moon*.

“Biting into the clouds and bones of desire and devotion, love and grief, Allison Grayhurst basks the reader, with breathtaking eloquence, in an elixir of words. Like lace, the elegance is revealed by what isn’t said. This is stunning poetry,” *Angela Hryniuk*, author of *no visual scars*.

“Rich images and complex, shifting metaphors drive Allison Grayhurst’s poems. She focuses on sexual love and interior landscapes, widening to include the heart, eternity and all,” *Next Exit*.

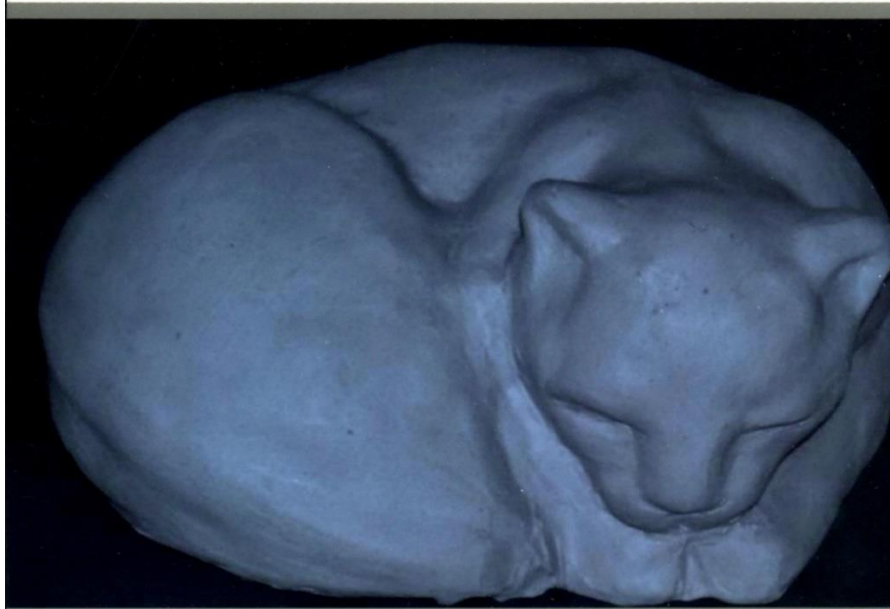
“Grayhurst’s rapturous outpouring of imagery makes her poems easily enjoyable ... Like a sear the poet seeks to fathom sensual and spiritual experience through the images of a dream,” *Canadian Literature*.

“Allison Grayhurst is a poet whose work is characterized by startling imagery and uncompromising emotion, whose pieces have appeared in prestigious magazines. Lights, darks, colors, and passions intertwine throughout the pages of her work,” *Louise E. Allin*, *Literature and Language*.

“Jocelyn Kain’s chapbook Before The Dawn, is thick with mixed images of rain, smoking cigarettes, the sea - images that appear in other poems, but in Kain’s poetry, the images come alive in a melancholic dance of the soul. This book is fresh, emotional, quality poetry. If Kain’s talents continue to improve she will someday prove to be a noteworthy literary figure,” poet *Davy Wood*, *Review of Before the Dawn*, published in the *Plowman*, 1989.

“A young and talented poet, Allison Grayhurst has created two books of richly imagined poems: Common Dream and currently Somewhere Falling from Beach Holme. As well as a sculptor, she is a grave, yet sensuous writer combining grace with deep emotions,” *The Kingston Artists Association*.

JUMANA AND PERFECT LOVE



TWO POETIC
PROSE PIECES

ALLISON
GRAYHURST

***Jumana
and
Perfect Love -
two poetic prose pieces***

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

Jumana and Perfect Love – two poetic prose pieces

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First addition

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by Allison Grayhurst

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Jumana

Part 1

Those crazy days waking up to suicides and promises of camping trips. I needed to feel some warmth in all those corners of metal and skin, but I was not ready. So I waited. Crouching against the morning's first light, I waited.

Great surges of compassion always left me feeling inadequate, that's why I avoided them. I could never really distinguish the difference between love and interference. So I waited, looking for words, left with nothing but the wait.

For a long time now my life has burned under the rule of imagination. I crumbled in that harsh reality, unable to bear its demand. Imagination! I cried - Where am I to follow you? Over the hills, burying my face in a bundle of daffodils? No, I could not. So I leaned backward to balance the weight of the shadow. I knew imagination was not strong enough to feel the ecstasy of love's touch. The pierce of blindness lifted (so many times). Again, it was the inadequacy that remained with me every waking hour.

Then one day, came a wonderful thing. Love. At first there was such a rarity in its touch. But after a while I understood it had always been there, it just needed a focus to make itself apparent. At first, I didn't believe, so I tried for a weapon in hope of seeing a sharpness behind its hypnotic glare. But nothing came. Only silence, and a rhythm, resting far beneath.

So I hid, trying to conceal the wars that were bottled up and contained deep within. Then just like that, amidst my confusion, love called to me

... It's not what you have, but how you receive it! And I saw.

There, my live was (rich in the deepest of senses) and still I stood with turned eyes. I pushed everything aside to be but one thing, to be confusion. But when he came into my life, the dull hysteria simply vanished. I relaxed. There was no more ugliness hovering over my eyes, slowly peeling them blind. I felt a crackle of horror, then it was gone. The tremble ceased. In that moment with full force, came freedom.

Like a slap on the ocean's ground, it came, rippling a great tide. The twisted face of misery lost its value. It was a miracle . . . to actually be plagued by nothing. There was no struggle, only sight. Only love. The seams of existence cracked, and along with them, the skeleton's life I held and named from vast experience. I was alone, without potential, without hesitation. The panic of the heart, the scream of inner deficiency, all of that, past.

How can I explain? It was the last solution. There was nothing else. It was the breakdown. So I said my testimony: How I attempted for life with a series of convulsing shocks. How I sought stimulation more than anything else. I admitted it all. It was then I knew - insanity would never set me on fire, no matter how hot it burnt. It just went on burning, stuck between the lips, waiting.

I suppose I have always been the lucky one. My strength never lay in endurance, but in change. Yes, I have been lucky.

I scrambled to the surface, touching the fine exterior. He brought me that, the touch. I let a tear escape. There was no whimper, only that solitary tear. It was the last solution. It was the breakdown.

He sang. Sensing me inside my most secret attempt to care, he sang. Over and over, singing. Leaving only a soft lullaby, there, tenderly to guide my way.

Part 2

All my life I have known, anything I ever touched I would have to desert. Now the moon, nothing but a fluff of glimmering haze, teases me. Though the stars are hidden behind clouds, I know the sky has watchers. Don't they know? An artist never seeks to love or be loved, an artist only seeks to *fall* in love.

They always told me to be careful of the small things that enter if the mind is allowed its own movement. But it has never been that way with me. It was always God that snuck upon me when I wanted to be frivolous, or in the very least, personal. Now there is only pain throttling inside my mind: The fire of the solitary pulse. Immortality is just a stain, and the belief in it, just vanity. Humble me. Humble me enough so I can learn.

Will I stand forever; without fear, just the wind making sparks where it shouldn't? Now there is only space. I am thrown to nothing with nothing in hand. I am infested with the hollow. How wickedly it scratches further in. All the time, further in. And this is the paradox: As I widen, the possibilities of who I might be, narrow.

I never cared much for all the things the world is made of. I am bigger than this, was my shout - I am bigger, and I refuse to participate. They forced me to feel all these things then told me to write them down. As if, only then, I have really felt them. My validity to this existence? My blackboard?

The sky belches forth its loudest cry, screaming in its torment the Ache. Even the expression of intensity must change. Even intensity can get boring - like an indulgence.

I am called out to face the paradox: I am not a writer. I am not a lover. I am not a kind one. I am none of those things people are. Each day I retreat further away from the world because I do not like the things it brings. That is not hard, but to have none of the treasures of solitude? That is hard. I have exhausted myself into the abyss. I have no surplus and no special thing to call my own. It sounds ridiculous, but I guess I've always known it would come down to this - desertion.

But now, as I touch it, even the experience of pain is snatched from me. All I have ever touched has grown tough and haunted. What

will they do when they find out? Will they kill? Will they . . . laugh? A lifetime seems to pass by in one single day.

Why could I never rest? Why the inner explosion each day? I wonder, is this the great difference between monks and artists? Monks hand over their lives to God, it is surrender. But with artists . . . God steals their lives away from them.

Part 3

This is my amazement. The cold walker licking the earth, spitting salvia and squandering God for one breath of pleasure. This is my amazement. The one who walks, bag in hand, smile on face, happiness on the tongue. This is my amazement. Those two out there, holding hands, talking in moderation and quiet tones. I see them wrinkled. I see them profound, at peace, and rocking. Sleep will overcome them. Sleep will prepare their death. Death will not be a violation on their lives. This is my amazement. Those who wipe catastrophe away with tears and eventual overcoming. I abandon you.

To breathe in. To breathe out. This is my addiction. I may squint but I will never perish. Is this a place where none can follow? Is this reality? Reality is isolating. God, what hangs furiously? What hangs triumphantly? I have seen him. I have touched the arrow. It makes me long. It makes me suffer. How can I leave things equal? How can I hold this love and not be made small? Will this love reduce me? Will it make me an amazement?

I am the dropping that warms the bird's wings into flight. So must I admit the criminal? Weigh me down. Nourish me. My soul is pressed against an illusion. My soul has no patience for these things. The world is afflicted and I don't care. Weigh me down. My soul has fallen in love.

They built a bridge, a gateway. Love, the great revealer. But now I cry out my claim: Loneliness, I can bear. Love, I cannot.

I am listless. The pressure sticks. The pressure of prophecy. Who will bleed their name on the sidewalk? Who is it that calls me into this love? Can't I save the world and despise it at once? Can't I give them a new truth even if I am a virgin to the old? Why do I pass this gate? I detest the union of blood against blood. The flesh sticks. The flesh hangs on. I have seen. I have tasted humiliation. I have tasted, fleeing full force into the darkness, where others feared but I knew only safety. Tell me, who cannot receive? Am I one of those?

My caution always took the form of risk. I knew I was strong enough for any collapse, but success would leave me shattered.

Anything prolonged bores me. Why make me this arrow? This is my amazement.

So much has been sacrificed for certainty. The need for a constant fierce movement has denied me so much of ordinary life. Flare not mystery - that is my salvation. My jaw cracks through my flesh and names me wild. My soul has fallen in love.

They made me a disciple of the rock. Now they bring me the wave. Now they bring the bridge into the outside world. Will I be filled with love just to know its torment?

It is only brief. Like those, I will walk past, build my mountain, and then join its ground. Time outlives love. I have watched them in heavy labour. I have seen the course.

No, your bridge is a faraway thing. I abandon.

Part 4

What a difficult thing to gain back perspective. This is what I have come to discover: In the end even the most trusted of companions will fail you. Reality is isolating.

I finally saw, my greatest fear was I wouldn't get slaughtered. My greatest fear was that he would actually love me back. I never did have much tolerance for this thing called 'joy'.

But what calls me out? I know any true solitary person is never pathetic. Have I reached my threshold? Something passes over: Strokes of unexplainable depth; strokes of wonderment.

Most of my life I have spent in preparation of love. My whole life has been nothing more than the re-assurance of my internal life. Every little thing out there was just the support-cast of my condition. I made this god with my every movement. This god, relied on me for its existence.

My soul is lodged in discharge. My soul is radical, intolerant of worship, intolerant of love. Does deception live within the attitude of indifference? Is everything done in desperation, just the remnants of a lie? Does the door swing, swing, then let loose?

My catalyst has always been force. But now they tell me - To burn is not enough. They tell me - Experience gives compassion. They tell me there is choice. They tell me - Your sensitivity is your strength. I tell them - But it's killing me... They do not know. They do not understand.

Part 5

If say, the cold war of uncertainty could pass me now... How can happiness be accompanied by such danger? I know the deathly feel of his kindness. I know the power of joy. I know of requital.

Lovers can rise above their separate worth, so gently, lovers in love. I cry to be let loose. I feel like a child pushed into a mood of weakness. The undercurrent. What has suffered? What has broken its paralysis?

Behind the sun lies the moon's cool shadow just waiting to be born. But here, in bright daylight, I blink.

I am witch, not a prophet. A coiler, not a flyer. I want to wriggle in the undercurrent with warmth and delight. I want to fall into the second depth of water. I am not a novice. I have gained the rite of passage. I pant for the undercurrent. I want to move my hand through the flame, to cup it, to say - I have touched without possession. I have touched fire, and I smile, unscorched. I want to tell them.

This is not grey wisdom, this is the ape revised. The ape worshipped for its own power of evolution. The ape stands apart from the human; it is its own miracle. It is an urging, a scraping into the second depth where life is beautiful, where there is rescue and paradox means completion, where the impossible is natural.

My mouth is a bread crumb offering the last of my riches. What is the price? Paying is no longer the question. Paying has tripped and fallen on the gravedigger. Paying is abolished. Now the wind flows between us. No ladder. No sacrifice. Now God and I laugh freely.

I say love is the ultimate danger, the only safety. I say love is what is on the fringe of a scream. Anything unbroken, and yet, still falling. That is love. Love is what rests in the undercurrent. Love is the virtue that stretches itself . . .

Part 6

I have already heard the news. But what is this? The pluck? I know what I seek. I am thick and tearful, but I will last. And he will see me shine someday. He does not know, but I like the sun. I like the afternoon with nobody around. And even as the seasons move from one thing to another, time will vanish. And seeing the leaves fall, the snow drift, the birds sing, we will not be able to call it 'God'. It will be a period when people take on a new approach. Never again powdered. Never again snapped. Say, whirlwind. Say, love.

The night outside twitters grey and used. But I have asked for freshness. I smell him everywhere. Stirred and spontaneous, we will be again someday. But where is he now? Locked in some cubicle he calls 'dark hole'? An artist's definition: to live this life in service. Just to have him say - I know.

I have touched my existence through his tongue. He had my whitest offer, my prayer (no matter how subtle) he contained it all.

I do not want to recover from him. But my instinct is to exile and it is hard. He does not know, but I have friction pumping into my pores.

Today I wrote him a letter and it went like this...

Dear love, you were my greatest maturity. You tormented me from behind. You were my remembering. I bow to your wind - o my dart!

Part 7

From the very first sight of him, I made him my friend. All my life I have tried to live by more than survival. These were the motions of insanity.

Tuck me in the undercurrent where life is scarcely visible.

They thrust us into a corner. Into the sullen mystery, and brought us presents too: a warm slice of death; a toy for safe keeping in our tougher hours of pain. What are we to do? We have no discipline, only hunger.

Equality was pressing hard into the places I left open. I said - let me fall into you. I said - you trample on forsaken ground and that is why I love you. As soft as a broken limb.

And I saw him like a hard knot resting in my throat. And I wanted to yell out. And I wanted to hold him close. But once (only once) and it's gone forever. Against the movement. Against the cry. Isn't love always the same love?

There was not much to forgive, just to turn on the lights. He did not run away. I know, he just ran.

Part 8

No one can touch as I coil away, secretly pleading for him to follow. No one can make amendments. Smile or curse, I smoulder alone. Solitude never lacks company, only commitment.

Darkness sliced the worst of possibilities. But now, let me move my strength to this parable: What are the possibilities? Because he has failed me, has the whole thing been pointless? I commend his honesty, not his fear.

I said - Fine. It is because I understood. But maybe that was the betrayal - Fine, I understand.

My hands! Soon I will crush my skull between them crying out - Dedication! When I was in my room he told me - Swim, do not squirm. Do not squirm, bite down. But the force inside the squirm... didn't he know?

At seven o'clock tomorrow morning we'll go looking for our tribe. I can picture it now, arm and arm, waiting for the street lights to go off, waiting for our god to come back home.

These are my possibilities - reject of collapse. Every wisp of revolt has passed under my skin, and I multiplied. It was the striving, that was my psychology. Didn't he know? I strove and nothing more. I have tasted love. I have tasted betrayal; walking down lone dark streets, praying to my god to make it home. Is this what I deserve, all wrapped up in fire and cloth, beating my head against my hands? Is this what I deserve, pounding on hardened walls, softly?

Part 9

I long hid in the ocean's core chanting for people to pass. I was free to dominate. I was free to escape. I knew my condition. I hid, I plotted. I killed my loneliness. I served my brightest star. My personal sun. In my cave, I was capable of ambition.

Then they called out to me - Marriage. I heard the echo of belief. In my darkness prowled an intruder. I longed to rouse his temper, to find, to destroy, him. But he had patience. He whispered. So I consented and asked for only one thing, a quick death. I cried - I am not a monk, I am a human being. I made the wind rise. I pierced my own wound.

But my sun did not know how to die. Once my sun, now my enemy. It was godlike. It was innocent. It must be overthrown. But how? When he has walked away? Why give me the vision then demand me to desert it?

They showed me a ghost. My lover was a phantom and still they said - Follow him. How was I to revolt, lay down my solitary flag for a phantom? Was I to defend a kingdom that vanished the moment it was touched? They asked me to invade. They asked me - one who is weary, one who has never tasted soil. So I defeated my sun and was rewarded with dust. Not even my sun's own ashes, just the dirt of another world - that was my prize. They handed me sand and said - Now build. Now construct.

My sun would not forgive. It sentenced me a traitor. Such bright things do know forgiveness. To it, every moment is immortal. It does not pass, but remains. My sun lives outside of forgiveness. It banished me. It must be overthrown.

Again, I was deceived into the taking up of arms. Again, I was made a ploy, a heretic for a cause I only glimpsed and never chose. It struck me down.

Never again will I stand tiptoe on the face of the earth and dream of my strength. I am such a tiny thing, struck, stuck.

In the name of this riddle, exhausted, I decline. Now show me: What are my instructions?

“To live without him. And still, even harder,
to love without him.

Part 10

He left me a monument, something I promise to carry, no matter where the journey leads. I spent my life pivoting on God - that has been my only relationship. Maybe in knowing him, I found a cause. Maybe, I am blessed.

I walk in silence. Freedom has only shown me its face when I yielded. Healing happens in layers. No more relapses. No more jagged movements. Retrograding is for the stars, not for the soul.

I made my spirit a swamp. I encroached, I devoured. Then they came, found me with my delicacies and made me an outcast. It was the only way.

I long lived on the doorstep, sucking in what wasn't mine. I was induced by the smell of my prey. I loved its illness. I became pregnant with its sick flavour. But now, my soul relies on something different. Now my soul is devoted.

There is nothing that threatens me now. My solitude is not a threat. To know him still stings, but just like that, in layers, it will ripen into something yet unnamed. Have I been given my last chance? Still I lay, wondering.

Two massive waves colliding, that was what I knew. Then love passed my way, telling me of fantastic things. Telling me - Unless you believe in magic, your life will be empty of it. Telling me of a place where I belong, where the rigid eye does not accuse and nothing resigns itself to being foul and scabby, and yet, is foul and scabby. A place where pity has vanished.

All things must be complete when they unite. People must not tempt with the lukewarm, it is only unsatisfying. To touch everything with only half ourselves, that is the human destruction. That is what is subtle and disastrous. We always tempt with the half-made. We are not willing to make room for 'the full'. It is the doctrine of pleasure, the doctrine of war.

I know of capacity. I now know of potential. I hear the chants of my tribe. For a long time we have been separated. We ramble only because we have lost our language. Centuries have made us foreign. But we will be delivered. The hunger will deliver. And when it does, we will be delivered from it, never to hunger again.

There is inability in being born just an artist. Will they call me outgrown? Will they crack me and name me inaudible? In the end, I wonder.

How strange it is to be a soul on this earth. How strange it is to finally know: After all the shaking of bars, I was never captured. How strange it is to know, and then to lose, love.

Part 11

The answer, I wanted to say. But I grew numb mute in this understanding. And I fell. I fell to my knees in ceaseless wonder. I fell in love.

This news is all I have.

He must have been an angel, an angel who could avoid the storm, who could dodge raindrops. But now his mission has passed. There, look out on the street, it is him walking, running away. Say, love. Say, remarkable!

I was never converted. I was only stretched.

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Jumana was published in 1989 by The Plowman, written by Allison Grayhurst under the pseudonym of Jocelyn Kain. This is a revised version of what originally appeared in print.



JUMANA

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JOCELYN KAIN

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Reviews below of Allison Grayhurst's chapbook "Jumana" written under the pseudonym of Jocelyn Kain, were published in the "The Plowman – A Journal of International Poetry" 1989:

"After reading Jocelyn Kain's *Before The Dawn*, I was so impressed by her unique talent that my expectations were high when *Jumana* came along. It is difficult to describe *Jumana*. Sometimes it is reminiscent of a long soliloquy, and at other times, the impression is that Kain has used patches of her finest poetic lines and strung them together in order to create prose, then at other times, *Jumana* has the flavour of a personal memoir. There are times when her personal obsessions are laid bare before our prying eyes, and Kain titillates and seduces us. There are often times when this work creeps fairly close to the borders of sanity and insanity. Clearly, her voice is strong and passionate. She often grabs hold and confesses. Kain's poetry is among the finest I have read, her being a master of imagery," poet *Bernadette Dyer*.

"The images in *Jumana*, this excellent book of story-prose are intense and provocative. They are often disturbing, but only because some of us may find we are able to position ourselves in Kain's experience and reality. Which is, in fact, the goal and purpose of good writing. There is little doubt that these ten segments are autobiographical and with startling insight, Kain shares the depth of her vision along a journey of self-exploration. Her words are catharsis for the lonely, the sad, the uncertain, anyone, everyone. Only one who has endured great pain, bordering perhaps on the brink of madness, and emerged triumphant, can articulate such intensity while exploring the inner paths of heart and soul, too often veiled from public view. Definitely well worth a read," poet *Melody-Ann McCarthy-Smith*.

Perfect Love

Section One

Part 1

What gulfs between the world and the silent aspiration? What gulfs between the night and the vision? What gulfs between the tempest and the quiet utterings of failure?

There was a time discarded. Do you remember the time ignored? Where life became the worst of tasks ahead, and I could not speak? I could not hear, not of awe, not of love? Any closeness was like death coming over. Do you remember the last whisper? I remember the rage that never understood. The rage, because it never understood. Has no one the charge, the immaculate spurring onward? Has no one sight without laziness? Full sight, leaving no choice.

Do you remember the desperate condition of love's fierce pull? Do you remember the sad disgust? Do you remember the hopeless terror? Do you remember, I hated them?

What safety in the most thought-about dream. What safety to wander, raged, in the spark. My tongue became a laughing thing because it knew of imagination.

I do not live in fear. No, not in the Great Plan, not in the overworked bleeding heart. To follow the true desire I have relinquished all other desires and have seen what still lingers. What still lingers? A cold touch of pen to paper that doesn't know when its next move will be. And him. A love so observed but never known. Two things I dwell within, keeping one burning and the other flowing.

I am compelled to be still and not resist the stillness. It is the stillness that humbles me, the 'not knowing' that makes me dependent on God. I remember what gulfs between what moves-through and what kills. I remember the thin line of life's fulfillment. I remember the thread that weaves.

Part 2

Was the world in a place of unwilled passion? Was I a reactionary? After all the indifference of many people, could there be a likeness in this disease? I want to hear no more of human glory or human love, it has filled me and made me anguish. And then I ask, “Is this what I accept for my life?” Through all the sights of myths grown lazy, and the dramatic upbringing that has coiled and coiled around, still, I savour him.

I have seen him and it has left me a glance of infinity. I stand back to bleed my precaution. It does not meet. I do not understand. Away from the joining of him and I, my heart is not capable. How little I have saved to enter this moment. I am one who has opened but ever let a tear escape without restraint. I hide untroubled.

I almost lost the colour of his eyes. If it were not for that voice that rubbed and whispered, “Cleave! Cleave!” Where did it vanish? Where is that exuberant chant of love, where the heart knelt ceaselessly in amazement? Where the heart was so overjoyed, it disbelieved?

That a love so great could go unfinished? That a love so great would leave off like this? That the only way left to touch it, is to avoid it?

If he thinks of me as common, tomorrow will taste the burden of emptiness. Is that the scare, the emptiness? What a funny thing to feel triumphant in the face of those injuries where it all rests so unknown that even pain whistles its cry, delirious from itself. As much as I yearn and watch every sign, something has stopped being moved: I have faith in the very end.

This is where I am resurrected into the paradox. This is where I know, even in the face of death, I will glisten. Quietly, quietly and unafraid.

Part 3

I have missed him all my life. The loving hand brought down to awaken my eyes. The loving hand brought down to calm my savage longing. At one time I remember his smell and my heart rushed with joy. At one time, I loved. Such love had no relation. Even the voice settled. Even the voice curled into a trembling silence to listen and see what he might be. So few have passed my cave. So few have left their mark. Like morning and evening caught between the bright day, I may never recover. I may never think this way again.

Beneath the ecstasy that has not yet come. Beneath the awful stirrings of days past. Beneath the portion that is happy, lies the ache that never knew it was planted in a miracle.

Is my dream still blooming? Still only hibernating with stalled circulation? Still 'almost alive'? Will he let me lift my eyes to the sharp summer sun? Will he let me see what it is like to have all things visible? To have the first and last entrance out? To be revealed? I crave to run in fields. Something is shriveling and thinks it may never run again.

He brought me forth and said "Look, here is the sun. Here, stand here, it is warm. And there, out there, is your homeland." He has only whispered "Hot sun. Soft home." I walk and I tarry into a patterned loneliness. Each step the same. Each step, no further. When will he ask me to rise? And I will be mighty. I will be embraced, and it will make me mighty.

Pure is the empty hand, begging for something much more than charity. To breathe the impossible breath. Will I be awake? In spite of it all, will I be awoken? Will I survive it?

Part 4

My lips swell, he made himself effective, and now he sings in my ear, "Restoration!" In the moment of my withering, love builds.

Sleep now and be witless. Myself, disinterested but weeping, returning in and out of rapture. Lovers hold hands, and 'worth' is their only vow.

Where do I relax my poise, my strict solitary expression? In the elusive pattern of their foreign affectionate speech? Is this what is left? A river of subtle fury? Our inconsistent pregnancy?

I am losing his company and I know it signifies limitation. I was born a face. Now I live in moments of inexhaustible love and unbounded dismay. I am ashamed to meet him half way. Half-spring. Half-starlight. Half-rage. Half-joy. I am ashamed not to experience. Nothing of portion can breathe easily.

Alternating between a sunken acceptance and a jilted fury, I will argue my limitation. I will harbor, life is unequal. I have praised, waiting for amendment. Waiting unblinkingly to erect my faith. Who has taught us our hard identity? Joy has been consumed in all corners and I run my fingers across my eyes, telling them to be blind, telling them it has all been a mistake.

If am to be captured? If I am to wait? I will ask the question - Do you taste blood or only food? I will ask for the victim, for last breath I saw go asunder then out. I will ask, because I need to know.

Why was I made so frail? Why so wishful, so imagining? Why thrust me in desolation, make my heart mad? Angry of its suffering. Is this where I unfold, in the stillness that finds itself observing the rupturing storm? Is life forever unweaving then banning together in the midst of an unutterable sound? Is this where I begin to hear beyond discernment? Is this where I begin to place myself in some remote distance, able to watch myself enchanted, but still be unaffected? Where I will not call the joy a mistake because it will not be mine. Where I will not call to the pain, and call to it repeatedly, "Mercy!" Where I will say, "So what?" Where I will say, "Ah well." And never try for help again?

I'll send my love a picture. I'll send it in a frame, a picture of how I am today. And he will keep it for the days to come. He will often

**remember. I will leave nothing hidden in my gaze. I will stop asking
and I will start with this gift.**

Part 5

Can he see me wilting, gathering the last life-source of my bloom, and then nakedly, flexibly giving away? Words have dried in my mouth. Words, I am desperate to utter.

And compressed submission, and agitation, and the blowing up, blowing up then letting down, and the thirst - now mine, now unanswered, and the nameless fate, and the shadow behind every smile, and its history, and the thing that patches but never holds for long, and the eternal hemorrhaging of this one thing then of that one thing, and the one who has outlived itself, and the touching and the more touching, and the mystery that heads towards a dream. Have you ever felt yourself at the moment you've stopped seeking and headed towards a dream?

Something must outlast this emptiness, something must exchange places with it. But where is that word? The one word that will braise with the moon? The moon's cycles catch me in my awaited promise. When I frolic in its silvery light, I am invincible. I am great and sleepless. And there my angel speaks, almost telling me he will appear.

What I find, I will find. There will be no display, only an inner glimpse. Nothing will interfere. It is written, I will be free. No matter what happens or what I lose, this is no place for me.

This is the magic life and I don't have one word to elect it into my soul. Soon I will forget. I will soon start running, because I am here, without fulfillment. Those hours were alive, those hours that came and went where I conversed with my angel. Now that they stay, they have become an obstruction, a poison I must spew out and eventually deny. I am sorry for him that I cannot play. I am sorry for myself because I am still filled with the situation and I wonder, will it be this way forever? Will it always be my violation? Will it always make me limp? It doesn't matter, what matters is that I retreat, forfeiting my right.

The way I executed my love. The way I willed him away because I couldn't stand to see his face towering over telling me he hasn't forgotten me. But I feel forgotten. I feel every inch of deception showing in the glittering fire of his wings. I doubt he even

flies. The way I cannot go on. The way I can no longer watch him descend against all measure. The way I cannot hear his soft voice, and smile. The way I must live in the image - a glorious beginning and a tragic end. The way I cry. The way I have stopped crying and have become quiet. The way there is no fulfillment. In the midst of magic, there is no fulfillment. What has over-powered? What has shown its appearance? The way, I don't know.

Part 6

If I retreat into my own world, there will be an answer. Not of 'yes' or 'no', but still an answer. And occasionally it will disturb me.

Feel, feel the sea. Feel, feel of yesterday. Feel what once dangled, and now, suddenly, flares. Feel what is wished for and know there must be room.

There is no discipline. Discipline does not transform weakness, it stuns it. It is a crutch - impossible to walk without it, impossible to run with it. My first entrance into strength will be the understanding of my weakness. Act with kindness, act with intention. Feel, feel the great wind coming over. Feel the activity. Feel what renders it all possible. Lameness is the worst illusion. To see myself small, disabled, that is the enemy. That is the prevention.

God, give me practice to show my true look. Reason has no warmth. Truth alone is not enough. So I live with the eternal question mark, I live inside it. I live in my shyest secret, exposed. Am I falling under the thumb of a great philosophy - letting go of one rope to catch another? To climb, then drop. And morning will yield to evening, and so, evening to night. Where the intensity of the pain becomes proof of the intensity of the love. Where I am free and I must hold the demand of my freedom, which is - keep yourself free - and that is all.

Feel, feel the swelling before the change. Like a split in my breast, like something shocked. How do I protect myself without callousness or faked indifference? How do I love? Has it all just been the flooding over of an idiot?

When I found the space where deliberation and spontaneity have the same inner point, there in that space, I found myself capable of love. So few have passed my cave. So few have left their mark.

Part 7

Remember for an instant - The concepts of mysticism are often used as an excuse to avoid confrontation with the active aspects of truth. This is not what I want. To take chances only after they've been filtered through torment. That is the challenge, not of the compulsive thinker but of 'the solid one'.

I press my hands over the dream, and again, imprisoned, feel the whirl. And the voice stirred in me, and the voice coughed - "If anyone had sight they would know, even the Buddhas drove themselves full force into danger." The rudeness it takes for love to reap. What do you mean by such things - death? Is there no cleaner way? Where nothing remains unturned, and nothing, spoiled?

It is so hard to be soft against his brutality. To caress his soul and admit he needs to seek too. Nothing between us has been resolved, it has only been spoken. The dream, the fierce want, startles me. Sometimes I see only the breakdown, not the breakthrough. In sight of him, there is an upwelling sorrow. He is not like me, and I, not like him. I should slip away and never talk again.

But tell me to take hold of the strength gained by internal struggle, tell me it is the way to recommence, it is essential, it is integration. Tell me to fall, and I will fall, devotedly into this impaling depth.

Part 8

Slowly, it comes up. Slowly, I refuse his tenderness and look to resolve. He was my first dawning. The first love that rustled in my dark hours. In our time there was movement but no giving. There was no ground to quench the inward doubt of lover to lover.

We were hardly anything but soul to soul, but wind to rain, burning together a consecrated storm. I long to reach that place where something stands to guide between and in front as both a tireless bonding and as an insurance of mutual separation. I long for what is more than glorious. More than what divides and combines under the fine toothed-comb of analysis. Something warmer than the initial dream. Something that accomplishes.

Could it be I am asked to yield, for a second time to look upon him, to give it my all without giving up what is essential? I held it up, the magnificent up-surgings of love, but never believed in its significance, never held close what was hidden, and yet, centered. Touched fire and thought it to be empty, broke it open, and laughed. I was jealous of love, I heard the name like a haunt. It was not part of my design to relinquish my power. For what? A thought? Something invisible and dumb?

I wrote him a letter today. I testified my displeasure with him, but did not let it fall just before that. I left abruptly and said, "May I bless you?"

Still, his unfulfilled commitments congest my air. Still, he comes into my sphere when I am under the stress of surviving him. Still, he has returned after all the shoving away. He out-burns my resentment, astounds me, makes me self-discover. In pursuit of him, in quietly rising above the catastrophe and listening, in this new beginning, God advances.

I never understood how power was an agent to utilize the forces of love. Before him, I knew only of emotion or only of power. Most of the time, I was nebulous. No time left to have the passing of what once was promised but not revealed. I believe in immaturity, not in evil. No time left to not believe.

Is it possible, that there is no battle, only compassion? When all things vanish and the voice is only known, I ask myself, "What is

your highest truth?" Follow it, knowing it is good. Knowing, when under critical attack, I will be safe.

I am hanging over the palm of love. I am half in, half out, entering the deepest task. Love is anything that doesn't harm. Love is strength waving its seed, strength without intimidation, sufficient.

Section Two

Part 9

We stood somewhere between infinity and fear, merely human. We did not omit. We did not make ourselves rare, we made ourselves fascinated. We lived by more than stimulation, more than entertainment. We lived without decay.

My bitterness always had to do with God, saying “You interrupt my life and hound me down. You give me loneliness. You supply me with grief upon grief until I have lost all powers of expectation.” I raised myself high and cursed. How vacant were the days. How scarce the nights when I didn’t feel alone, my whole being uninhabited and emptied. None could come into my shell, and none tried.

Can we make it so that the deeper we reach within ourselves, that much further we will be able to extend ourselves? That the greater the solitude, the greater the intimacy?

How sad I am to relinquish my seeking. I could never fake myself fully. Now I am what I always ‘would be eventually’. Now I love.

Has he not slept long enough? Why does he yawn? Have I been created for this new existence? If not, then tear it from me quickly. If not, let me forget love and give me back confusion and the ready-made opinions to survive it.

I am ignited, climbing out of this shipwreck. I must never forget: Truth seeks truth. Truth will find itself. And on this same day, when neither of us lust after those constraining influences, it will all sink down into some permanent place. We will arrive, we will touch each other once again. And then, be still.

Part 10

From ash to regeneration. From the tragic rape to the better unfolding. From something powerful to something strong.

Last summer I was sterile. I was absorbed in ideas of what I thought I deserved to receive. Not him. Not love. Shaking my head, trying to knock the encounter out of my comfortable reality. Because each life contains its own interpretation of life. Because each life is strange.

It's as if I never felt anything before. As if, only now, there is adventure. Knowing there is no ransom, nothing left to examine. As if, only now, there is danger.

Everything that wants to return to God will always be permitted a space to offer its expression. Could it be any other way? Could there be such a thing as love denying itself? All restriction is burned. In this state 'all-things' become 'one-thing' threaded back and forth, immaculately. Fear, could I love you, have your voice in my ear - "It is all gone, tremble, you have grown too dreamy. He doesn't recognize you." Could I have it and not call you the advocate of destruction?

I will call the fear a gift that leads me to humility. And I will wonder at you with enlightened eyes, knowing you have changed me.

For each nonsensical disposition, for each symptom of the world's supported basic ethics, for each diseased philosophy, for each unblest experience, for each issue that has proceeded and proceeded but has not elevated humanity, for each habit that has left the soul insecure, there is no - "On the other hand . . ." I must run into them, cradle them with a lover's arms, and none of them will be made small. None of them will seem like hypocrisy.

First there is allowance. Then there is the forcing away and the strict command. Then there is the kiss. Truth is slow, it digests, longs for fresh blood. Contrary to current belief, truth is not something to be skimmed through and hopefully gotten. Do I want the genuine thing, or do I want the stiff word? The word I made into a corpse, the one I adorned and knelt down to as if it contained a terrible sorcery? The stumbling block?

We must remain without ease in our blood. Love without strength only becomes a perverted emotion. To relax and still be alert in the energy. To feel oddly rhythmic. To feel the tingle. To feel love, spectacular, soft and jolting - subtle, but never grey.

Part 11

Can I love without force, no slow triumph, no need for the consistent eternal link, no trying? Sooner or later I will discover that he is neither hard and dominated nor still and high. This is his mistrust - to never ride the wave, barefooted. Until he climbs out to grip my offering, until I learn to be more than a comforter or rash intruder, we will stay apart.

The impatience I feel to have him ready. Can he hear it like I do, the spittle, the wild discourse of this burden? I am near but I am still miserable. Was an old sword, an old grievance. Was him that I wanted, not God. Was so tied together that I could not see.

God says "Trust." and I am offended to hear such a thing. Appalled that I must make a noble stand, return to him and kindle that which I've lacked throughout my entire life. God says to obey the laws of love not of suffering.

Before my eyes he grows outdone. Some see him licking filth as if it were candy. Some see him as mighty madness. Some see the mystic creep upon them. They accept this and are amazed. Some do not judge. One doubt, and it will kill me. One doubt, and I have willed suicide. The voice tells me that he is fighting and great. No doubt, everything he was born to be. No doubt, my highest truth, my lasting courage.

Section Three

Part 12

Yesterday I saw a great white sun pushing on through the day. All day I watched. Sun went down. White sun lost against the white sky. And soon it collapsed into the night without a sound. Soon I felt its desire.

We don't get 'lost' in love, we discover love like something rolling. Like something out of perseverance.

What is the straight line? To walk, to wash the hands, then carry on? Down through love, down through the divided human being? In part, I am a single happening. In part, he is the loving way. Heal my knowledge, make it my reconcilable outcome. Make me worthy to hold peace. Piece tightly knitted to piece.

What sacrifice to receive the fruits of my deepest prayer. What sacrifice to finally become whole again. There is great strength without any idea as to why. There is great strength in this dark disadvantage. Sacrifice is not the point, it is only a condition that directs me to the point.

Knowing him transformed my solitude. It was my last communion. However humble I get I keep finding another straw pricking its thorns into my 'worst-of-all' situation. That very last straw I am intent upon. Even if I must awaken it. Even if it is endless. Even if there is no 'last straw.'

How can I know him, know him exact and know God all the more? Is it the one principle I won't have to prove? Is it my confidence in this terrifying inspiration? I abandon myself to him, and I am not flat. I am in the right place. I have learned to relinquish possession, relinquish detachment, relinquish control, relinquish sacrifice, relinquish the greatest fulfilment and the highest aspiration. I have learned to belong to purpose.

See love come tumbling out of that great white sky to greet me in my emptiness. Genuine mystery, genuine straight line. One dedication.

Part 13

Touching something ancient to the soul, but new to the mind. Touching the place where the personal becomes the Almighty, where things unthicken, and intensity no longer makes me a fool. After all the attacking elements of the unexpected, after all the disloyalty that cannot be dismissed, I will try. Careful, so as not to force a single thought.

I will try, but I will not pretend our union. My love of God must be greater than my love for him. Hoping the two will find a place to centre and be absorbed within one another. Hoping to make it one dedication.

He is magnetic, like a rare desire, like a wound that demands more room to be experienced. Tempered by limitations, and willing to live it all out, I hear the voice- “Life is striking” like a quiet wisdom. Like a radiance safely returning into my face. Like a perfect love.

Peering at him, I am calm. I am swelling, and he shines. He is miraculous. And I am blessed. And it may be costly. It may be a long torment. Starting back home now, I will make the fire a steady flame. I will make myself self-sufficient. Is this how I will learn to get to the centre, then pivot? It is a personal situation. It is the voice of the Almighty. I cry out, and I will be answered.

Part 14

Once I made the choice of love, I became absolute. Otherwise, I was only a relative undestined creature. In the crevice of my belly there is calm, there is surrender, without expectations, and yet, not hopeless -knowing fulfillment comes in unpredictable ways.

Awareness stimulates, it is the light that steals nothing from the dark. If I start to tolerate, I will delay life. I will make the darkness a deep transformer instead of an invader. The struggle with life is that we are constantly trying to destroy the idea of death, to destroy the very thing that makes it all possible. I will come to him only out of choice, not out of desperation. Let me never interrupt the flow with panic. It is anxiety that perverts reality. I will take my time with this love, this greatest sensibility.

Part 15

What is not? Show me what is not then cut me down and carry me away.

I saw that I only had to open my eyes to know my own awakening. Why should I care about my overzealous soul? Why should I care about this obtuse world that I cannot participate in? Why should I care about the pain? It is only pain. When an artist's work becomes stale, when a love dwindles, that is hell. But why should I care about hell?

Peering into the senseless, senseless. If I reach up, and I touch, and I find what is ruthless, and I find disease? And I find love was wrong? And I find to feel such love was to feel too much? And I find myself in the belly of midnight with no way out? Make it quick! There is only estrangement. Faith can only be learned when there is complete darkness. Make me a faithful one, and make it quick.

The sun melts down across the sky. I see the glow between the ash of clouds. I am crippled before it, entering into it. How the day relieves itself into this night. I am pressed into a tight place of wonder. I look around and am seized into this celestial magnitude. I am squeezed into oblivion, entirely exposed. There is no fear when facing something truly great. O great sky! O great love! There is no intimidation.

Part 16

In the dark stink of my childhood I caught a taste of the lasting. The grim focus of isolation led by thousands of heavy hearts sold me to a different kind of atheism: The belief in synchronicity without purpose. Laws that stand onto themselves. Laws without intelligence. I held myself high. I held the deepest contempt, misused my mouth and mistook my rage for love. Under the covers rose the inadequate one, tripping on a candlestick that sunk cruelly into darkness, as I passed over, me, a follower of the flame.

What was it that roamed? Something evident? Something questioning? Only grey, I remember. Grey, and not other things. And I spoke. Writing down words as a single journey. I encountered revenge on the tip of the pen. It is the art of the intellect to reduce everything to one word. It is the art of the intellect to ignore the personal.

If love is, love is everywhere.

But if it makes sense, why do I stand alone? In the ugly generation, alone? In the downward bliss, alone? In the pain of something 'all-too-lost' alone? In the last word that brought the world to its knees, alone? In the victim that spoke to me, "Get up!" alone? In the hero who couldn't speak but knew of so much to say, alone? In the corpse, in the ghost, in the broken-limb dancer, alone? Without him.

Now say, "This is the age when we overtake God. Add a new mark, a new word." Now say, "We should build a huge bonfire and burn all that God once was, let us see what new God awaits us." It is my heaviness that has led me to him. My anguish is the only reason for my search, and my glowing find.

But the same one who led me into the depths of a fierce sweetness, is the same one who has ended the interlacing of both worlds. He could only stand on the outskirts, could never agree and say, "Rare!" Does he know me?

Do you? The hero is never interested in climbing just for danger. Look at the shore and touch me there. Lay your fingers on my hands, on my shoulder, and we will close our eyes from the riot of our conflict. We will be brilliant and deliberate. Look out onto the water. You say there are no shadows, only sunlight. You say I am lost up hell's river.

I have found how to suffer. I have found that you really do have to hang on the cross in order to be resurrected. From ash to regeneration. From the tragic rape to the better unfolding. From something powerful to something strong. I have found that it is just one of those things you have to live through in order to know. I have found it is only in the depths of your soul, life is discovered. And I have found this without you.

Why is it? That I loved him, that he was not? That I loved him and it depleted? That I learned to wait without the hope of rescue or recovery? That I learned that love is Absolute? Where will I find him? In his laboratory of analogies and conclusions? In the mystic's power of avoidance through evading? In the extra pound?

Nothing is lost. Between the world and the silent aspiration, between the night and the vision, between the Earth and God, what gulfs? Love. I feel you but I cannot feel myself, I feel you without me.

I will wait and look out to the cold sea, obeying no rules, obeying no laws. I will curl into the night and I will cry for him. I will cry as deep and as wounded as I am. And it will be good. And I will be fine, lost up hell's river. Lost in the belly of midnight, God will enfold me.

We must fight for the interlacing of both worlds. We must fight for love's evolution. We must die for love, winged or unwinged. Marked or unmarked. For whatever gulfs between the divided human being, in that horrifying depth, in that incredible delight, love is found.

So I am moved. No more afraid to live by the one rule "No denial." No more afraid that I loved him and he was not.

Perfect Love was published in 1989 by The Plowman, written by Allison Grayhurst under the pseudonym of Jocelyn Kain. This is a revised version of what originally appeared in print.



PERFECT LOVE

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JOCELYN KAIN

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Reviews below of Allison Grayhurst's chapbook "Perfect Love" written under the pseudonym of Jocelyn Kain, were published in the "The Plowman – A Journal of International Poetry" 1989:

"Jocelyn Kain's work is interlaced with the inner spirit as it comes to terms with the decay of toxic waste, only to marvel at the landscape's regeneration after the abominations it has endured. Her chapbook *Perfect Love* is a monologue in prose of physical intensity, obviously related to experience. The book gives the impression of a young person striving to come to terms with the limitless possibilities that a future may hold, all the while chained by life's obsessions. We see here the marvellous talent of a poet seeking another source, another life paradigm to embrace, to seize hold of. In this case, one feels her quest is attainable," poet *Richard Ball*.

"In *Perfect Love* Jocelyn Kain takes us on an epic journey of the heart and soul. Her prose is flanked with haunting images, pain, and ultimate joy. This gifted writer never fails to elevate the rest of us into unknown heady heights, leaving us tingling. Like a caterpillar into a butterfly, Kain struggles through a metamorphosis, revealing in this love letter her journey to fruition. Along the way, this memorable journey is marked by unforgettable prose, steering us into the light, showing us flashes of her vision. The poet reveals see-saw emotions with this thing called love, and tells us her true feelings. One experiences triumph when she finally realizes her goal, finally finds and accepts love," poet *Bernadette Dyer*.

"*Perfect Love* by Jocelyn Kain is unusual chapbook. It is not easily assimilated at a first reading. It wrenches the heart and bares the soul. This book is a record of a heart, a soul wrestling with God – for God is love and God is perfect, perfect love. But Jocelyn Kain is imperfect as she seeks that perfect unity with God. There are so many good things in this book, such an exposure of reality. This place is far too small to enable me to share with you any more than a small portion of the wonder of this book," poet *Hugh Alexander*.

About the Author



Allison Grayhurst is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Three of her poems were nominated for “Best of the Net” in 2015, and one eight-part story-poem was nominated for “Best of the Net” in 2017. She has over 1,125 poems published in more than 450 international journals and anthologies. Her book *Somewhere Falling* was published by Beach Holme Publishers, a Porcepic Book, in Vancouver in 1995. Since then she has published fifteen other books of poetry and six collections with Edge Unlimited Publishing. Prior to the publication of *Somewhere Falling* she had a poetry book published, *Common Dream*, and four chapbooks published by The Plowman. Her poetry chapbook *The River is Blind* was published by Ottawa publisher above/ground press December 2012. In 2014 her chapbook *Surrogate Dharma* was published by Kind of a Hurricane Press, Barometric Pressures Author Series. In 2015, her book *No Raft – No Ocean* was published by Scars Publications. More recently, her book *Make the Wind* was published in 2016 by Scars Publications. As well, her book *Trial and Witness – selected poems*, was published in 2016 by Creative Talents Unleashed (CTU Publishing Group).

Collaborating with Allison Grayhurst on the lyrics, Vancouver-based singer/songwriter/musician Diane Barbarash has transformed eight of Allison Grayhurst's poems into songs, creating a full album. "River – Songs from the poetry of Allison Grayhurst" released October 2017.

Allison Grayhurst is a vegan for the animals. She lives in Toronto with her family. She also sculpts, working with clay; www.allisongrayhurst.com

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“Allison Grayhurst’s poetry combines the depth and dark intensity of Sylvia Plath, the layered complex imagery of Dylan Thomas and the philosophical insights of Soren Kierkegaard, taking the reader on a fearless journey through the human condition, delving with honesty into death, grief, loss, faith, commitment, motherhood, and erotic love. Grayhurst intertwines a potent spirituality throughout her work so that each poem is not simply a statement or observation, but a revelation that demands the reader’s personal involvement. Grayhurst’s poetic genius is profound and evident. Her voice is uniquely authentic, undeniable in its dignified vulnerability as it is in its significance,” Kyp Harness, singer/songwriter, cartoonist, author of Wigford Rememberies, Nightwood Editons; www.kypharness.net

“Allison Grayhurst is the Queen of Catharsis. Her poems are like cathedrals witnessing and articulating in unflinching graphic detail the gritty angst and grief of life, while taking it to rare clarity, calm and comfort in an otherwise confusing world of deception, mediocrity and degradation. Allison Grayhurst takes the sludge of life, and with fearless sharpness of eye and heart she spins it free of maggots with the depth of honour and passion. Allison Grayhurst's work is haunting, majestic and cleansing, often leaving one breathless in the wake of its intelligence, hope, faith and love amidst the muck of life. Many of Allison Grayhurst's poems are simply masterpieces booming with thunderous insight begging to be in Bartlett's Quotations, lines such as "I drink necessity's authority." Nothing is wishy-washy in the realm of Allison Grayhurst. Allison Grayhurst's work is sustaining, enriching, and deepening for the soul to read... a light of sanity in the world. As a poet, Allison Grayhurst is a lighthouse of intelligent honour... indeed, intelligence rips through her work like white water,” Taylor Jane Green, BA, RIHR, CHT, Registered Spiritual Psychotherapist and author of *Swan Wheeler: A North American Mythology* and *The Rise of Eros*.

"Her poems read like the journal entries of a mystic – perhaps that what they are. They are abstract and vivid, like a dreamy manifestation of soul. This is the best way, in prose, one can describe the music which is ... the poetry of Allison Grayhurst," *Blaise Wigglesworth*, *Oh! Magazine: Ryerson's Arts and Culture Voice*.

"Grayhurst's poetry is a translucent, ethereal dream in which words push through the fog, always searching, struggling, and reaching for the powerful soul at its heart. Her work is vibrant and shockingly original," *Beach Holme Publishers*.

"Allison Grayhurst's poetry appears visceral, not for the faint of heart, and moves forward with a dynamism, with a frenetic pulse. If you seek the truth, the physical blood and bones, then, by all means, open the world into which we were all born," *Anne Burke*, poet, regional representative for Alberta on the League of Canadian Poets' Council, and chair of the Feminist Caucus.

"Read at your peril. You will never look at this world in quite the same way again. Your eye will instinctively search the sky for eagles and scan the dark earth for the slightest movement of smallest ant, your heart will reach for tall mountains, bathe in the most intimate of passions and in the grain and grit of our earth. Such is Allison Grayhurst. Such is her poetry," *Eric M. Vogt*, poet and author.

"Grayhurst is a great Canadian poet. All of Allison Grayhurst's poetry is original, sometimes startling, and more often than not, powerful. Anyone who loves modern poetry that does not follow the common path will find Grayhurst complex, insightful, and as good a poet as anyone writing in the world today. Grayhurst's poetry volumes are highly, highly recommended," *Tom Davis*, poet, novelist and educator.

“When I read Allison Grayhurst's poetry, I am compelled by the intensity and strength of her spirituality. Her personal experience of God drives her poetry. With honesty and vulnerability, she fleshes out the profound mystery of knowing at once both the beauty and terror of God's love, both freedom and obedience, deep joy and sorrow, both being deeply rooted in but also apart from the world, and lastly, both life and death. Her poems undulate through these paradoxes with much feeling and often leave me breathless, shaken. Allison Grayhurst's poems are both beautiful and difficult to behold,” *Anna Mark*, poet and teacher.

“Allison Grayhurst’s poetry has a tribal and timeless feeling, reminiscent of the Biblical commentary in Ecclesiastes,” *Cristina Deptula*, editor of *Synchronized Chaos*.

"Allison Grayhurst's poetry combines the depth and dark intensity of Sylvia Plath, the layered complex imagery of Dylan Thomas and the philosophical insights of Soren Kierkegaard, taking the reader on a fearless journey through the human condition, delving with honesty into death, grief, loss, faith, commitment, motherhood, and erotic love. Grayhurst intertwines a potent spirituality throughout her work so that each poem is not simply a statement or observation, but a revelation that demands the reader's personal involvement. Grayhurst's poetic genius is profound and evident. Her voice is uniquely authentic, undeniable in its dignified vulnerability as it is in its significance," Kyp Harness, singer/songwriter, author of *Wigford Remembrances*.



Allison Grayhurst is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Four times nominated for "Best of the Net", 2015/2017, she has over 1125 poems published in over 450 international journals and anthologies. She has 21 published books of poetry, six collections and six chapbooks. She lives in Toronto with her family. She is a vegan. She also sculpts, working with clay.

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